New ‘smart’ nanoparticles deliver drugs directly to tumors, plaques

BY GWEN ERICSON

Ultra-miniature particles—called nanobialys because they resemble tiny versions of the flat, onion-topped rolls popular in New York City—could soon be carrying medicinal compounds through patients’ bloodstream to tumors or atherothrombotic plaques.

The nanobialys are an important addition to the stock of diagnostic and disease-fighting nanoparticles developed by researchers in the Consortium for Translational Research in Advanced Imaging and Nanomedicine (C-TRAIN) at the School of Medicine. C-TRAIN’s “smart” nanoparticles can deliver drugs and imaging agents directly to the site of tumors or plaques.

The new nanobialys weren’t cooked up for their appealing shape—that’s a natural result of the manufacturing process. The nanobialys answered a need for an alternative to the research group’s gadolinium-containing nanoparticles, which were created for their high visibility in MRI scans.

Gadolinium is a common contrast agent for MRI scans, but recent studies have shown that it can be harmful to some patients with severe kidney disease. The “nanobialys contain manganese instead of gadolinium,” said first author Dipanjana Pan, Ph.D., research instructor in medicine in the Cardiovascular Division. “Manganese is an element found naturally in the body. In addition, the manganese in the nanobialy is tied up so it stays with the particles, making them very safe.”

The bulk of a nanobialy is a synthetic polymer that can accept a variety of medical, imaging or targeting components. In a recent issue of the Journal of the American Chemical Society, the researchers reported that targeted manganese-carrying nanobialys readily attached themselves to brain tumors, which are found in high concentrations in plaques and blood clots. Laboratory-made clots then glowed brightly in MRI scans. They also showed that the nanoparticles can deliver drugs and imaging agents directly to tumors and plaques.

New ‘smart’ nanoparticles deliver drugs directly to tumors, plaques

The nanobialys can be a more effective way to administer medications and imaging contrast agents because they are targeted, packaged units—drugs and imaging agents stay on the nanoparticles, which can be made to concentrate at a specific site in the body.

Nanoparticles can be a more effective way to administer medications and imaging contrast agents because they are targeted, packaged units—drugs and imaging agents stay on the nanoparticles, which can be made to concentrate at a specific site in the body.

A good book, a great settingbarbara Baumgartner, Ph.D. (top, center), associate director and senior lecturer in the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program in Arts & Sciences, chats with freshmen outside the Danforth University Center Aug. 25. The group was discussing Elizabeth Kolbert’s book “Field Notes From a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change.” All incoming freshmen read the book this summer as part of this year’s Freshman Reading Program. The discussion was one of many led by WUSTL, faculty and held at various places around the Danforth Campus. Themes from the book will be the focus of other events and lectures throughout the academic year.

Vice Presidential Debate Washington University in St. Louis October 2, 2008

Campus community hard at work for October event

A s the Oct. 2 vice presidential debate looms closer, many in the WUSTL community are hard at work preparing for its arrival. The University will host the debate scheduled for 8 p.m. Oct. 2 in the Atlantic City. This is the first time the University will host a vice presidential debate. It’s the fifth consecutive time the University has been selected by the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), the event’s sponsor, to serve as a host.

Our selection once again as a debate site can be directly attributed to the dedication, skill and hard work of the many men and women on our campus who have assisted in the production of previous debates at Washington University," said Bob Wise, assistant to the chancellor and chair of the Presidential Debate Steering Committee. "Much work has already been accomplished this summer, but there is also significant work to be done before October 2. I am extremely confident that the team we have assembled will help us solidify our reputation as the ‘gold standard’ when it comes to hosting debates.

"Our mantra has been that we can’t sit back and rest on the laurels of past debates. We’ve spent the summer getting ready; and we’ll soon be ratcheting up our efforts to prepare for a hectic few weeks leading up to the debate. We have every confidence that this will go well," he said.

See Debate, Page 2

Institute for Public Health debuts with symposium

BY JESSICA MARTIN

The Institute for Public Health will host its inaugural symposium Sept. 5, at the Eric P. Newman Education Center on the Medical Campus. The conference symposium begins at 8:30 a.m. with an overview of the Institute. The overall goal of the event is to raise awareness of public-health research and service currently conducted at the University.

"There is a significant amount of public-health-related work already underway at Washington University," said Edward F. Lawlor, M.D., Ph.D., dean of the George Warren University."The interdisciplinary nature of the Institute and the breadth of expertise among faculty members at the University is extremely exciting and encouraging," Kolbert said.

"The magnitude of public-health challenges must be faced with the same energy and determination with which we met the challenges of World War II," Wild said.

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Debate: Campus community showing strong interest — From Page 1

The CPD, a nonprofit, nonprofit organization established in 1987, is responsible for selecting the venues and producing the presidential debates. The CPD's three presidential debates will be held in 2004. The University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss., Sept. 20; the Student Union at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., Oct. 13, and the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss., Oct. 7; will host the presidential debates. The University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss., Sept. 25, at the Student Union; and Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., Oct. 17, are hosting the vice presidential debates. The University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss., will host the vice presidential debate between Vice President Dick Cheney and Sen. John Edwards at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

Worldwide television viewership of the vice presidential debate is comparable to the presidential debate, with an estimated 70 million to 100 million viewers. The University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss., will host the vice presidential debate.

The presidential debate will include domestic and foreign policy questions, according to the CPD. A formal change is being introduced in two of the presidential debates as well as the vice presidential debate.

Each of those debates will be divided into 10-minute issue segments, the moderator will introduce each segment with an issue on which each candidate will address, while the moderator will facilitate further discussion of the issue, including direct questions to the candidates, for the balance of that segment.

Time will be reserved for cognitively challenging questions by each of the candidates in each debate.

Paul G. Kirk, Jr. and Frank J. Balch, members of the CPD, will moderate the presidential debates.

The CPD is responsible for distributing all audience tickets to the debate, and there's no guarantee that the University will receive any tickets.

Any tickets WUSTL does receive will be distributed to currently enrolled students through an online lottery process. Students interested in attending the debates will be required to register for the ticket lottery on the Web site, debate.wustl.edu. Students selected by the ticket lottery will be notified by email and given specific directions on how to obtain tickets, if any are made available by the CPD commissions.

Students with questions about the debate should contact the Office of the Public Affairs, Campus Life at 955-8449.

By Jessica Davis

Michael R. Cannon, J.D., executive vice chancellor and interim chancellor, and John S. Wrighton, chancellor for finance and chief financial officer, will work to 'untie the knots' on the issues that have made the 2004 debate a 'gold standard' for debate sites.

The University hosted the first presidential debate in 1996 that eventually was canceled, hosted the third and last presidential debate of the 2000 campaign season and the second of the final presidential debates of 2004. The University was the golden child for the debate in 1996 that eventually was canceled, hosted the third and last presidential debate of the 2000 campaign season and the second of the final presidential debates of 2004. The University was the golden child for the debate in 1996 that eventually was canceled, hosted the third and last presidential debate of the 2000 campaign season and the second of the final presidential debates of 2004.

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people who are intubated to aid breathing and the North American Silver-Coated Endotracheal Tube Investigation Group reported that silver-coated tubes led to a 36 percent reduction of ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP). VAP can strike up to 15 percent of people who are intubated to aid breathing and can cause death in an estimated 20 percent to 40 percent of those stricken.

"VAP is a relatively common infection and increasingly one caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria," said lead author Martha H. Kollef, M.D., professor of medicine in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. "These findings are important because we have evolved around modifying hospital practices. The silver-coated endotracheal tube has an advantage in that it may require no additional cranial nerves, surgeons, anesthesiologists, and doctors, who may already be overburdened."

Past efforts to prevent VAP included elevating the head of a patient’s bed, routinely checking ventilator tubing and emptying condensates, monitoring leading to prevent reflux into the lungs, frequent handwashing and isolation of infected patients. The silver-coated endotracheal tube is structurally identical to a typical tube, so its adoption would not require any change in standard hospital procedures.

Kollef said 36 percent of patients are intubated for less than 10 days. Looking at just the first 10 days of intubation, the silver-coated tubes were associated with a 48 percent reduction in VAP, and when VAP occurred in patients with silver-coated tubes, it occurred later on average than in those with uncoated tubes.

Silver kills bacteria and yeast by sticking to the organisms’ enzymes, genetic material and other molecular components, preventing basic functions and interfering with reproduction. These organisms very rarely develop resistance to silver, and the metal has no known side effects in humans.

The new endotracheal tubes are coated with silver nanoparticles, created by C.R. Bard Inc., that releases silver ions to the surface of the tubes. There, silver exerts a broad-spectrum antimicrobial effect, reduces adhesion of bacteria to the tube and blocks the formation of biofilms, communities of microorganisms that build up significant protective structures on surfaces.

Kollef, also medical director of the medical intensive care unit and of respiratory care services at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, said the silver-coated tubes are likely to be more expensive than uncoated tubes, but that the cost is easily recovered if the silver-coated tubes reduce the number of VAP cases.

"I think this is just the beginning for this kind of technology," Kollef said. "In the future, we could see other types of coolings with other functions placed on devices that come into contact with the body," he said.

Friedmann receives lifetime achievement award for martial arts prowess

By Beth Miller

Alberto Friedmann hasn’t let a diagnosis of a degenerative joint disease stop him from doing anything he has wanted to do in life.

In August, the exercise physiologist in the Division of Geriatrics and Nutritional Science and seventh-degree black belt received a lifetime achievement award from the Southeastern Martial Arts Hall of Fame in Orlando, Fla., an honor given to only a few each year. The coach of the U.S. National Martial Arts Team that competes around the world, Friedmann is a well-decorated champion and is considered one of the top martial arts instructors in the country.

Although Friedmann already has been induced into seven halls of fame, he still counts one of his achievements of receiving this honor was the opportunity to meet others in the field who had been wanting to work with for years. A sports nutrition conference, held in the same location as Friedmann’s conference, was attended by many current and former athletes, and the two groups mingled.

"I’m from Boston originally, so it was really neat when I met the World Red Sox pitcher, asked me for my autograph and a photo," Friedmann said.

Friedmann started martial arts at age 12, then at 14 was diagnosed with osteoarthritis, or bone and cartilage disease. Diagnosed with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome at age 21, doctors told him he would be in a wheelchair by age 25. Friedmann’s determination and athleticism have kept him out of one.

"We all have a good chance of being in a wheelchair at some point in our lives," he said. "There is no point in giving up what you enjoy. I was doing this long before I was diagnosed."

The tall and tanny Friedmann sheds off his disease and attributes his participation in the martial arts for keeping him healthy.

"I’m a big fan of exercise and movement," he said. "Nothing bad comes from being in good physical shape.

Exercise is good for any population." In addition to training world-class athletes, he also teaches martial arts and self-defense to children and adults with special needs.

In 2004, he carried the Olympic torch in St. Louis and during the day he left to compete in Barcelona in the World Peace Games.

Friedmann stopped competing in 2002 but is still relatively new and is working on his eighth-degree black belt.

A 10th-degree black belt is the highest one can go in the sport.

"The more important part is that I’ve won," he said. "I’ve probably lost 100 or so.

But don’t think Friedmann has got ten Grammy awards. Friedmann has won hundreds of competitions and awards and recognitions. Although the martial arts are not an Olympic sport only kind of fame he’s now working on his eighth-degree black belt.

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Brain tweak lets sleep-deprived flies stay sharp

By Michael C. Purdy

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ing away slows down your brain, scientists have long recognized. Mental perfor-
mance is at its peak after getting a good night’s sleep. The brain needs sleep to rest and recover, but they’re addictive and lose their effectiveness with repeated use. This research should help us find methods for maintaining mental acuity that have specific effects, are less addictive and retain their potency.

The results appeared in Current Biology. Aug. 1

A Shag’s lab was the first to show that fruit flies enter a state of inactivity comparable to sleep that is comparable to sleep that has no known side effects in humans.

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University Events

"Bold Strokes' celebrates works of alumnae Ezell, renowned set designer

St. Louis native John Ezell is one of contemporary theatre’s most influential set designers. Over the past five decades, the WUSTL alumnus has created hundreds of sets for major regional, national and international companies and festivals.

Beginning this month, the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts' De Lee Gallery will present "Bold Strokes," an exhibition of Ezell’s Stage Designs of John Ezell. The exhibition, which opens at 6 p.m. Sept. 5, will coincide with a talk by the artist, will include drawings, models, painter elevations and other material surveying the breadth and scope of Ezell’s work. Born and raised in St. Louis, Ezell became fascinated by scenic design as a child, peering over the backstage fence at the Muny in Forest Park. In 1954, he earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in painting from WUSTL’s School of Fine Arts (as the Sam Fox School was then known). After a stint in the U.S. Army, Ezell became a professor in the college’s scenic design area. He earned an master of fine arts degree in 1968 from Yale School of Drama.

Considered a "director's designer," Ezell is known for respecting the playwright's textual prescriptions while also infusing a sense of theatricality, scholarship and art history. He was among the first American scenic designers to make extensive use of polyesters, vacuum formed thermoplastics and other experimental materials.

For example, his 1969 design for Igor Stravinsky’s "Oedipus Rex" was the first stage setting conceived and executed in polyurethane expandable foam and was later named one of the 10 most "significant American designs of the decade" by the International Theatre Institute of Brussels.

Ezell has spent much of his career focusing on little-known works — especially so-called "unplayable" plays — by major American modern dramatists. He has designed a series of important world premieres, including Eugene O'Neill's unfinished cycle "The Calms of Capricorn," an early work from Thornton Wilder’s "The Angel That Troubled the Waters," and Horton Foote's acerbic family comedy "Dividing the Estate."

Other notable shows include George Abbott’s Broadway production of "Bye Bye Birdie" and the television adaptation of O’Neill’s "A Touch of the Poet." In all, Ezell has worked on more than 350 productions for many of the world’s most prestigious venues, including the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Istanbul Theatre Festival, the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre and the Royal Danish Ballet in Copenhagen. Ezell also has designed for a score of regional theaters, including the Kansas City Repertory, the Milwaukee Repertory and the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Ezell has collaborated extensively with the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, where his credits range from "Almost September" and "Death of a Salesman" to "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." His work on "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum!" and "Health, Wealth and Wisdom" was nominated for a Kevin Klein Award for Outstanding Set Design in 2006 and 2008. Additional honors include nine Circle City Awards for the Award for Experimental Television Art at the International Non-Commercial Television Festival in Milan; and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Award for Excellence, for his design of the Emmy Award-winning "The Playboys of the Western World." In 2001, he received WUSTL's Distinguished Alumna Award.

Ezell currently serves as the Hal and Sarah Kemper Professor of Design at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), where he heads the theater department’s scenic design area. He also serves as a consultant to Yale’s Reindeer Rare Book and Manuscript Library and recently returned from being inducted into the College of Fellows of the American Theatre at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Ezell’s set design from the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis production of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." This and other sets by the acclaimed designer will be on display at the De Lee Gallery through Nov. 22.

Mo Rocca • Microbial Forensics • Dance Close Up

Lectures

Thursday, Sept. 4
11 a.m. "Sociolinguistics and its Applications," Vikarazin Suleymanov, assistant professor, Department of Linguistics, College of Letters & Science, U. of Iowa, 220 Schoonover Center, 935-3980.

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Monday, Sept. 1
5 p.m. "The Times and the Sound of Poetry," Reyn Schuchard Memorial Lecture in Cancer Research, presented by the Department of Pediatrics, Section on Hematology and Oncology, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto.

Wednesday, Sept. 7
10 a.m. "Sociolinguistics and its Applications," Vikarazin Suleymanov, assistant professor, Department of Linguistics, College of Letters & Science, U. of Iowa, 220 Schoonover Center, 935-3980.

Wednesday, Sept. 1
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Friday, Sept. 1
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Groups work together to provide debate programs

By Barbara Rea

The Washington University community has a long history of civic participation, yet today, many students are not informed about internship and political student groups. As the host of the 2008 vice presidential debate, this declaration to citizenship and democracy is even more pronounced.

This fall, a host of programs and panels have been developed by the V.P. Debate Program Planning Committee in collaboration with other groups on campus to engage students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends and neighbors in the electoral process, seeking new knowledge and exchanging opinions about political and social issues and just a few hours to the election.

Student Union, Campus Life and the Lederer Institute for Public Service have combined resources to support additional student-led programming related to the election year. Undergraduate and graduate student groups may apply for small grants to cover program expenses such as rentals, materials, supplies, refreshments and speaker honoraria. The funding may fully cover program costs or be supplemented by other resources. Collaborative proposals are encouraged.

Proposals are being accepted through November. For more information, contact  at  or .

The following list is a compilation of events that have been planned. As new activities are developed, they will be added to online lists. Most events listed are free and open to the public, although some may be geared specifically to WUSTL students and faculty.

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known for his innovative use of light and glass, em-
dome for New York's Penn Station to the $80 million
Kassabaum, on projects ranging from a blue glass
Richard Meier, SOM and Hellmuth, Obata +
United States and abroad, including Norman Foster,
architectural space. His firm, launched in 1978, has
strength — to enrich the aesthetic experience of
in Architecture & Engineering.

Emerging Voices by the Architectural League of
Metropolis, The New York Times and Architecture &
tutions, including Architecture, Architectural Record,

Trained as an architect and sculptor, Carpenter is
knew we needed to find a substi-
people having diabetes and re-
And with a growing number of

approaches that are broader than
taditionally undertaken from one or
twice, to eliminate health dispa-
t the people, will require new
approaches integrating efforts
from many disciplines. The five
areas the Institute will focus on
were driven by the needs of the
community and the ongoing
research activities of faculty
members across the University,” he

WUSTL faculty with research,
teaching and experience working in
the field of community health
should be able to help everyone.
And with a growing number of

should be able to help everyone.

The following incidents were reported to University Police Aug. 27-Sept. 1. Readers
who have information concerning these incidents are urged to call 935-5555.

Nanoparticles
Nanobialys are first step in right direction
— from Page 1

In the past five years, Huff + Gooden has pro-
duced building projects in excess of $50 million,
from small renovations and large-scale new
construction to urban interventions and campus
master planning.

The work has been featured in many publica-
tions, including Architecture, Architectural Record,
Metropolis, The New York Times and Architecture &
Urbanism, and has won numerous design awards.
In 2001, Gooden and Huff were recognized as
"Emerging Voices" by the Architectural League of
New York. That same year, their company was named one of six leading firms practicing exceptional archi-
tecture outside the “Centers of Fashion” by
Architectural Record magazine.

The Public Lecture Series will continue Sept. 15
with MacArthur Fellow James Carpenter, principal of
James Carpenter Design Associates in New York,
who will present the Cannon Lecture for Excellence
in Architecture & Engineering.

Trained as an architect and sculptor, Carpenter is
Learned in the revolutionary use of light and glass, em-
ploying new technologies — as well as the material's inherent
transparency, reflectivity and compressive
strength — to enrich the aesthetic experience of
architectural space. His firm, launched in 1978, has

collaborated with architects and engineers across the
United States and abroad, including Norman Foster,
Richard Meier, SOM and Hellmuth, Obata +
Kassabaum, on projects ranging from a blue glass
bridge in Seattle's City Hall to smaller buildings

dome for New York's Penn Station to the $80 million
Kassabaum, on projects ranging from a blue glass
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All talks in the Public Lecture Series are free and
open to the public and begin at 6:30 p.m. in Steinberg
Hall Auditorium unless otherwise noted.
For more information, call 935-9300 or visit
samfox.wustl.edu.

The schedule
• Sept. 8, Jana Hawley, professor and department
head for apparel textiles and interior design, Kansas
State University.

Cite ID: 19771545

Published: 09/25/1983

Washington University in St. Louis

Welcome to campus
Students were able to enjoy a variety of activi-
ties during Fall Orien-
tation Aug. 21-28.
Freshmen (above) attend the Club 40 Dance Aug. 22
near the Clocktower on the South 40. Junior Kim
Henderson (right) gets a caricature drawn by an
artist during "Cleve-
land Night" Aug. 23 in the
Cantons University
Center. The opening-week
activities were designed
to acclimate the students to campus and promote
fun and friendship.

Popular brown-bag lunch series begins 13th year
— by Jessica Martin

Faculty and graduate students in Louisana-universi-
ties with an interest in labor, households, health care, law
and social welfare are being invited to take part in a series of
Monday brown-bag luncheon seminars to be held on campus
between through Dec. 1. Now in its 13th year, the
"Weight, Families and Public Policy” series features one-hour
presentations on research inter-
ests of faculty from local and national universities and other
institutions. The series is de-
signed to promote interdisci-
nary research.

Presentations will be from
noon to 1 p.m. in Seigle Hall.
Room 348, and will be followed
by a half-hour discussion.
The series begins Monday,
Sept. 8, with a lecture by Valerie
Rainey, Ph.D., professor of econo-
mics at the University of Califor-
nia, San Diego, on "The Rug Rat Race.”

The schedule
• Sept. 8, Juan Pantano,
Ph.D., assistant professor of
economics in Arts & Sciences,
will speak about "Strategic
Pricing, Birth Order and
School Performance.”

• Oct. 20, James P. Smith,
Ph.D., senior economist at
RAND Corp., will "Discuss The
Impact of Childhood Health on
Adult Outcomes.

• Nov. 7, Sentinel Holiday,
discuss "Innovations in
Health Care Delivery: A
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Symposium
Areas of focus driven by
needs, academic research
— from Page 1

WUSTL faculty with research,
teaching and experience working in
the field of community health
should be able to apply to be Scholars
at the Institute for Public Health.
Scholars will participate in
Institute programs, lectures and
workshops focused on address-
ing regional, national and
international public-health issues.
Small grants will be available
to teams of Scholars to seed interdis-
ciplinary programs and projects.

Over time, the Institute will be
developing infrastructure to
foster collaborative public-health
research, teaching and service
across the campus.
At present, more than 100
University faculty members have
submitted applications for Scholar
positions.

The Institute's inaugural event is
its first public program.
For more information about
the symposium or to apply to be
an Institute Scholar, contact
Courtney Beers at 454-7998 or
beers@wustl.edu.

Nanoparticles
Nanobialys are first step in right direction
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Notables

By Jessica Martzin

W ustin, J.D., professor of pathology & immunology, received a $72,872 grant from the National Science Foundation for research titled "Mechanisms of Signal Degradation in Innate Immune System Patterning in Diabetes." Also receiving the grant was Carl D. Hopkins, Ph.D., of the University of Minnesota.

Andrea Goldschmidt, graduate student in computer science, has received the American Chemical Society's first "Outstanding Thesis Award." The award recognizes a student's outstanding contributions to science and technology.

Michaela Becchi, graduate research assistant in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, has won a $5,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to develop a system for the recognition of natural language.

Matthew Arthur, professor of psychology, received a $2,000 grant from the American Psychological Association for research titled "Understanding Persistence in Health Behaviors." The grant will support research into the factors that influence persistence in health behaviors.

Mitchell S. Sommers, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology in Arts & Sciences, has received a three-year, $192,745 grant from the National Science Foundation for research titled "Improving Cochlear Implants for Older Adults." The grant will support research into the effectiveness of cochlear implants for older adults.

Applications available for Bear Cub Fund grants

The University's Bear Cub Fund is soliciting applications from WUSTL faculty members who want to move inventions from their laboratories to the marketplace.

The fund supports innovative translational research that is not normally backed by federal research grants. Applications are due Oct. 15.

The Bear Cub Fund was established in 2001, and it is administered through three WUSTL Technology Management.

For more information about the grants and to download an application, visit om.wustl.edu/ bearcubfund/index.jsp

Zacks receives $1.5 million to understand ever memory

Jeffrey M. Zacks, Ph.D., professor of psychology in Arts & Sciences, has received a five-year, $1,548,619 grant from the National Institute on Aging for research titled "Encoding and Retention of Changes in Life Span." The grant will support research into how people's understanding of changes as they grow older.

Other collaborators include Dan Heed, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology and of African and African American Studies in Arts & Sciences and research assistant in the School of Medicine's Center for the Study of Aging and Physical Disability under the direction of Leon S. Kellar, Ph.D., director of the Center.

The research, supported by the School of Medicine's Center for the Study of Aging and Physical Disability under the direction of Leon S. Kellar, Ph.D., director of the Center, will test how people's understanding of changes as they grow older.
Ak Todd Zenger, Ph.D., how his tennis game is progressing, and he’ll tell you, “It’s coming along.” That’s because he has been playing regularly with Olivia Business School colleague Ron King, Ph.D., the Myron Smith Professor of Accounting. And their court performance is set to improve with the recent hire of strategy professor Nick Aygren, Ph.D., a tennis player.

“We need one more, and we’ll be set for doubles,” Zenger says.

For Zenger, the Robert and Barbara Frick Professor of Business Strategy, the very best raffles, far and away, occur in the world of management research, where ideas and theories are volleyed, lobbed, popped, angled, spun, cross-sliced, punched, base-lined and routinely smashed to create new knowledge that shapes and improves the understanding and practice of business.

Zenger studies corporate strategy. He has written on economic theories of the firm, employee compensation, organizational design and innovation.

And at a career high point, when many academics might relax their research agenda, Zenger presses on. He is effective in doing both, this often requires dropping one approach for the other.

“Now, you’re focusing on becoming a hyper-innovative organization on the proof for new businesses, products, and services,” he says. “You decentralize and gear your company toward that approach. And very often, the result is increased innovation.

“Sometimes, however, the structure and approach breeds inefficiencies, which precipitates a string back to centralization and an emphasis on operational excellence,” Zenger says.

Zenger and frequent collaborator Jackson Nickerson, Ph.D., the Frahm Family Professor of Organization and Strategy, have studied how and why these continuous shifts occur within companies, dubbing it organizational vacillation or, as some describe it, the pendulum theory.

Their collaboration has spawned many influential papers on various topics, including a pioneer research that examines “combustion points” — costs to the MBA program — of people who turn down a job offer. The two were pre-selected with the 2008 Olin Award in recognition of research that transforms business.

“Todd is a marvelous colleague,” Nickerson says. “As researchers, we have wonderful conversations, pushing each other thinking, clarifying questions and refining their theories on topics of mutual interest. Todd does not write papers, he crafts prose. He writes with quality, and I have learned a great deal from him.”

Inspired by the best

Zenger was brought up by parents who prized and modeled the value of education. While both earned doctorates — his mother in music and his father in business administration — neither pursued an academic career.

Zenger himself had no inclination until he took a handful of courses in the undergraduate economics program at Stanford University. Two of these courses, in organization and strategy, were taught by prominent scholars and a third by a well-known consultant who would reshape management thinking with seminal work on the art and science of leadership.

“Tony Peters had, in that same year, published a book that I found fascinating. And I realized that I could make a career in organizational management theory and practice,” Zenger says. “I was teaching a graduate course at Stanford, and I obtained special permission to take it.

Inspired by these teachers, Zenger applied to both master in business administration and doctoral programs during his senior year. In the end, he took his father’s advice — “You can do anything an MBA can do with the Ph.D.” — and, upon graduation with distinction in 1983, he headed to the University of California, Los Angeles, where he earned a doctorate in organization and strategic studies.

After a year on the faculty of Pepperdine University, Zenger answered an advertisement for a position at Olin. “It was a perfect fit,” he says. “I arrived as the fourth in a combined strategic/organizational behavior group; he says.

A new vision

At Olin, Zenger quickly became a standout. In a few years, he was invited to teach executive education courses and increasingly gaining national prominence for his work within the core curriculum across all of Olin’s research.

The scope of his influence on the school’s requirements and culture is broad and deep. Committed to building undergraduate strengths, he recently helped develop a new vision for the program.

“We want to engage students with deep-dive experiences in faculty research,” he says. At the other end of the spectrum, he continues to teach and advise doctoral students. This year, he also begins his term as chair of the tenured faculty at Olin.

Other roles include associate editor of Management Science (strategy area) and board appointees on the Academy of Management Review and Strategic Management Journal.

A former chair of Olin’s strategy area who also served two years as senior associate dean for academic affairs, Zenger is pleased with the company he keeps.

“We’ve had a lot of success with faculty recruitment, and I’m excited about our growth. We’re not huge but have become prominent in the field of strategy.”

One measure of the muscle is that the four tenured strategy faculty serve on the editing board of Strategic Management Journal, the most prestigious journal in the field.

Tenured faculty also serve as editors or associate editors for other top strategy journals.

Clearly, those net assets are hard to beat.